# Tigertail Angels

*“Under the sea…under the sea!”*

As I walked along the Marco Island shoreline, the cheerful tune of *The Little Mermaid* rang out from my phone, alerting me to a call from a friend whose beachfront condo is adorned with mermaids, shells, and treasures from the sea.

“Hey,” I laughed as I answered the phone. “I’m in the neighborhood. Want to come out for a walk on the beach?”

“Sure,” she said. “I’ll be right out.”

A few minutes later, my friend crossed the snow-white sand outside her building, barely recognizable in a winter hat, heavy sweatshirt, and long pants. I was similarly bundled in a fleece sweatshirt and long bike shorts. Although it was a sunny day, the heavy wind chill made the air feel unseasonably cool. Hardly swimsuit weather, at least not for us locals.

As we walked along the shore, I noticed a brightly colored, crescent-shaped object flying in the distance above Tigertail Beach. “Wow,” I said, “what a perfect day to go kite flying!”

My walking partner replied, “I don’t think that’s just a kite,” When I looked at her quizzically, she said, “you’ll see!”

We continued northward up the beach and crossed the storm-eroded land strip from the gulf to Tigertail Lagoon. Sure enough, we saw that the distant colorful object was no ordinary kite being flown by someone standing on the beach. To my surprise, the kite we saw was flying someone across the lagoon!

As it turned out, the adventurous flyer was one of many kite surfers enjoying the breezy afternoon in our island paradise. A handful of surfers zoomed alongside the beach, skillfully maneuvering their boards across the water while controlling them with the harnesses of their colorful kites. Dozens more hovered in the airspace across from Hideaway Beach. It was amazing to watch the nearby surfers dart across the water, sail around daring turns and leap into the air to soar in thrilling bursts of flight. The group that floated in the distance looked like a gathering of peaceful alien spacecraft quietly observing the beauty of the world below.

We watched the show with delight, wondering aloud how awesome it must feel to be able to fly. When it was time to leave, there were still many surfers on the beach awaiting their turn to launch. Taking care not to step on the kite strings carefully laid out on the sand, we wished them all a safe and fantastic flight.